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A judge declined to toss Bill Cosby's sex assault case. 4-5

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PAUL SUSPENDS CAMPAIGN

1 Republican Rand Paul suspended his presidential bid Wednesday after his small-government campaign failed to gain traction with voters. The senator from Kentucky was the second Republican candidate, behind former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, to drop out of the race since Monday's night's Iowa caucuses. That contest launched the parties' process to nominate candidates for the November election. REUTERS

SOMALIA PLANE BLAST

2 Investigators believe a bomb probably caused the onboard explosion that forced an Airbus A321 to return to the Somali capital of Mogadishu for an emergency landing this week, U.S. government sources said Wednesday. One man was killed by the blast Tuesday on the Daallo Airlines plane, officials said. Local authorities north of Mogadishu said the body of a man, believed to have been sucked out through the hole in the fuselage made by the blast, was found in their area. REUTERS

GUILTY PLEA GUN CHARGE

3 Real estate heir and murder suspect Robert Durst pleaded guilty to a federal gun charge in New Orleans on Wednesday, setting the stage for his return to California to face charges in the 2000 death of a longtime friend. Durst, 72, could be sentenced to seven years and one month in prison under his plea agreement, followed by three years of supervised release. REUTERS

7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

SOUTH PHILLY CRASH

7 A police van carrying two shooting victims to Penn Medical Center was involved in a serious crash with a blue sedan at the intersection of Grays Ferry Avenue and Washington Avenue in South Philadelphia on Wednesday. Two people suffered injuries and the shooting victims were quickly transferred to another vehicle and rushed to the hospital.

MAIN PHOTO BY CHARLES MOSTOLLER, ALL OTHER PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

NY ESCAPEE GETS MAX

4 A convicted killer whose daring escape last year from an upstate New York prison triggered a massive three-week manhunt received a maximum sentence on Wednesday, after apologizing in court for his actions. David Sweat pleaded guilty to two counts of escape and one of promoting prison contraband in November, five months after he was shot and captured about two miles from the Canadian border. Sweat and fellow inmate Richard Matt broke out of the maximum-security Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, New York, on June 6. REUTERS

FLINT WATER VICTIMS

5 A group of academics and activists Wednesday called on Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder to establish a compensation fund for victims of Flint's lead-contaminated drinking water, with one member of the group proposing the state set aside at least $1 billion. The group of 200 professors and advocates, which calls itself the Experts of Color Network, said in a letter to Snyder the fund would pay for claims, health screenings and treatment for those in Flint affected by the crisis. REUTERS

VIRAL BEATDOWN VIDEO

6 A video depicting a bathroom beatdown at a Philadelphia high school, posted to spread awareness of bullying, has gone viral. The clip reportedly shows 16-year-old Mia Chanel DeJesus, a sophomore at Northeast High School, being punched and dragged by her hair by four other female students. SPENCER BUELL

FACEBOOK

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A New York City native, Johnathan began performing at age 11 with the world-famous Boys Choir of Harlem. For seven years, he was intensely trained in all forms of music including classical, jazz, hip hop, and gospel. Johnathan experienced a string of unforgettable, inspiring moments as a member of the Boys Choir, which included being awarded the lead tenor role for the choir, singing at the intermission for Luciano Pavarotti's Concert in Central Park, performing in a live show on Broadway for two weeks and winning second place in the Lena Horne Vocal Jazz Scholarship. Johnathan graduated from the University of Hartford's Hartt School in May 1998 with a degree in voice performance, and shortly after his graduation, Johnathan was invited to begin his professional entertainment career with the 129th Edition of *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey*. Joining Johnathan is our talented, entertaining, energetic and acrobatic Legend Seeker, Paulo dos Santo. A master of the art of Capoeira, a Brazilian combination of martial arts, dance and acrobatics, he possesses the natural ability to inspire laughter in *Children Of All Ages*. Paulo discovers new legends, and brings them forward for all to see at *The Greatest Show On Earth*.

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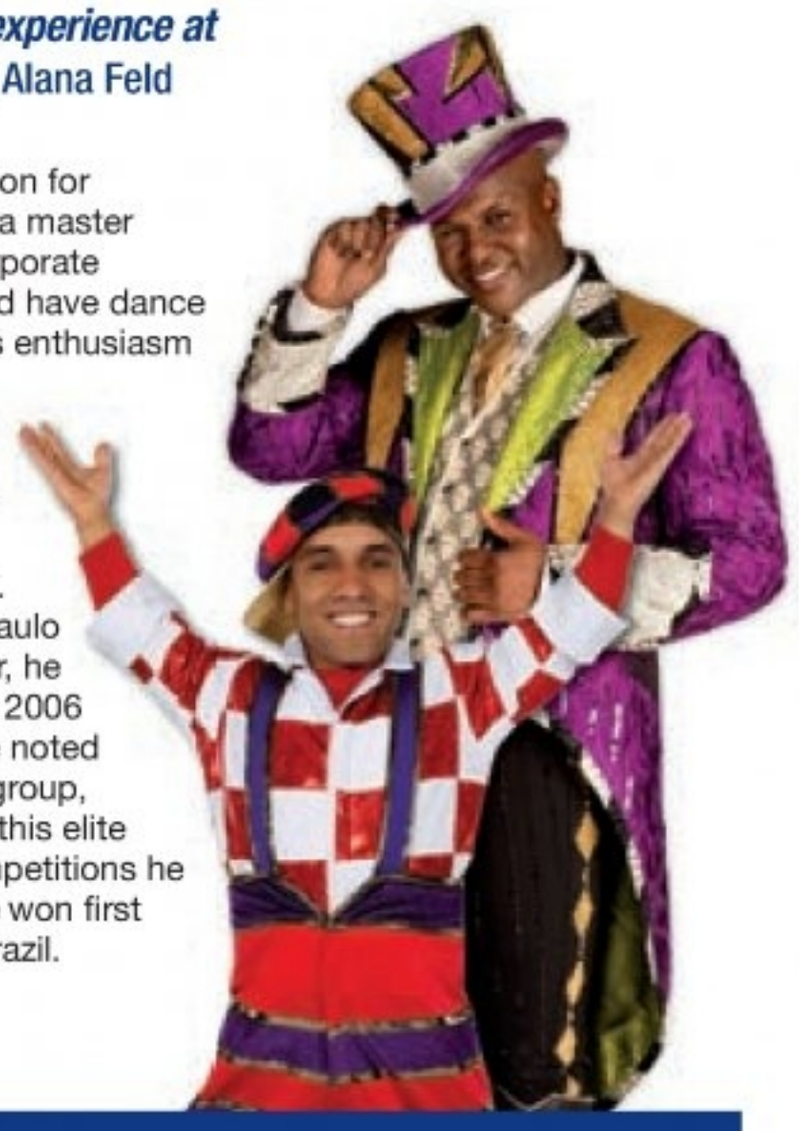
Paulo played sports growing up, and had a passion for movement and performance. He and his Capoeira master would teach one another dance moves and incorporate acrobatics. They would practice their routines and have dance competitions on the streets of Sao Paulo. Paulo's enthusiasm for performance broadened when, at age 20, he began to participate in theater. He joined the touring production, *The Wizard of Oz*, and discovered that "it doesn't matter the size of the man, what matters is how capable the man is." Paulo's passion for performance was ignited. In 2005, while working on a circus production, Paulo first experienced America and loved it. Soon after, he returned to his country to teach Capoeira, and in 2006 became a Master in Capoeira. Paulo's skills were noted by the leader of a famous competitive Capoeira group, the Santa Maria, and he was asked to be part of this elite troupe. Paulo was successful in many of the competitions he participated in, and as a crowning achievement, he won first place in the National Capoeira Competitions in Brazil.

Paulo's acrobatic skills, performance ability and dedication caught the eye of *Ringling Bros.* Producers Nicole Feld and Alana Feld. His debut with *Ringling Bros.* was in the 140th Edition and Paulo continues his role as the loveable Ringmaster's sidekick in the new 144th Edition, *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey* Presents *LEGENDS* in Philadelphia at Wells Fargo Center February 17–21st.



Judge tosses Cosby's claims

"A promise by a prosecutor is enforceable. He's not looking for special treatment. If any other defendant had the former sitting DA come in and testify, there would be no prosecution."

Tayback

After days of testimony, Cosby's attempt to get charges against him thrown out failed.

SAM NEWHOUSE
@scnewhouse
sam.newhouse@metro.us

The sexual assault case against Bill Cosby in suburban Philadelphia will move forward after a judge ruled Wednesday Cosby is not protected by a 2005 deal.

Judge Steven O'Neill said he found "no basis to grant the relief requested," in a five-minute announcement of his decision, and dismissed a defense habeas corpus motion on the basis of the alleged agreement.

O'Neill also dismissed Cosby's motion to have Montco DA Kevin Steele removed from the case for discussing it during his 2015 campaign for office.

Montgomery County prosecutors defeated Cosby's team of top-shelf attorneys despite one of their own, former Montco DA Bruce Castor, testifying that his 2005 decision not to prosecute Cosby for drugging and touching Andrea Constand at his Cheltenham Township mansion was permanently binding.

Castor's credibility was assaulted by his successor, Kevin Steele, in closing arguments Wednesday afternoon.

"Credibility is out the window at this point," Steele argued — pointing out that Castor said at different times in media reports and letters around 2015 that prosecution against Cosby was not precluded, and that the Constand case could be revisited if new evidence surfaced.

"He says, 'Mr. [Brian] McMonagle, [Cosby's lawyer] 'I'm not on your team, I want them to win,' and then stands up and says, 'You can't prosecute because I am the sovereign and I made this edict,'" Steele scoffed.

"Sovereign edict … it's not documented anywhere through this proceeding, even in their own documents. A secret agreement that permits a wealthy defendant to buy his way out of a criminal case isn't right," Steele argued. "It's not reasonable to not have this in writing.

Bill Cosby's legal team, Monique Pressley, left, and Brian McMonagle

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# of immunity

Holding onto his security team, Bill Cosby uses a cane as he returns to Courtroom A after a lunch break yesterday. POOL

… It's not reasonable for them to rely on this supposed unilateral transactional agreement."

But Cosby's lawyer, Christopher Tayback, argued that any agreement made by Castor was legally binding.

"What Mr. Castor did was lawful," Tayback argued. "The current DA's hands are bound. Mr. Castor made the deal he had made, he made the promise he had made."

Even if Castor's agreement was only oral, it would still be binding, Tayback said.

"What we're talking about here is honoring a commitment."

Constand's civil lawyer, Dolores Troiani, and her former co-counsel, Bebe Kivitz, both testified earlier Wednesday that they weren't aware of any agreement immunizing Cosby — flying in the face of Castor's testimony that he made the decision to help their lawsuit, and with their knowledge, as he testified Tuesday.

"No lawyer for Cosby ever mentioned that there was any agreement, ever," Troiani asserted.

Troiani said Castor "traumatized" Constand and her family by declining to charge Cosby.

District Attorney Kevin Steele

She said they only learned of his decision when he released it to the press and that she had to read it over the phone to Constand.

But New York lawyer John Schmitt, Cosby's general counsel, claimed that Cosby would never have admitted to drugging and touching Constand in a deposition for her civil lawsuit without knowing he could never be charged for that crime.

"Can you tell me if this was so important, having an agreement, why there's no place in the stipulations, in the depositions, that refers to the Fifth? This agreement?" Steele asked, his voice rising to a shout.

"I can hear you. You don't have to yell at me," Schmitt replied huffily.

Schmitt said the agreement with Castor never needed to be memorialized or documented in any other way than a 2005 press release by Castor.

"I relied on the combination of the press release signed by Mr. Castor, and his oral assurances to Wally Phillips, who assured me it was sufficient," Schmitt testified. Tayback protested that under any circumstances, an oral promise from a prosecutor was legally binding.

After Judge O'Neill's ruling overruling the non-prosecution deal, lawyers argued whether Steele should be disqualified from the Cosby case over statements made during his campaign for the DA's office in 2015 and retweeting an article about the Cosby case.

O'Neill dismissed that motion, finding "no misconduct" and ruling that none of Steele's actions during his campaign disqualified the Montgomery County DA's office from handling the case.

Cosby's preliminary hearing is now scheduled for March 8.

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Community schools director named

Susan Gobreski SUSAN GOBRESKI, TWITTER

Longtime education activist Susan Gobreski has been picked as Mayor Jim Kenney's community schools director, the mayor announced Wednesday.

Gobreski has spent the last decade involved with policy development on community outreach campaigns, among other public school-related initiatives.

Most recently, her roles have been as executive director of Education Voters of Pennsylvania — which works to push politicians to adopt pro-public education agenda policies — and in the same position at Education Voters Action Fund of Pennsylvania — a nonpartisan nonprofit that links legislators with the public.

"Susan's longstanding commitment to improving our city's schools, coupled with her expertise in community engagement made her an obvious choice for this role," Kenney said in a statement.

"Her insightful policy ideas and ability to bring diverse stakeholders together around common goals is exactly what we need to make community schools successful."

Her new role will be to oversee the expansion of community schools in Philly, according to a city spokeswoman.

Community schools serve as hubs for social services. When public school students having particular needs, in areas such as English as a Second Language or special health needs, Gobreski links them with area service providers and partners. JENNY DEHUFF

Kenney promises school enhancements

Mayor Jim Kenney said he's given Philly principals his personal cellphone number and email address.

JENNY DEHUFF
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

Mayor Jim Kenney speaks to the press alongside a group of principals. CHARLES MOSTOLLER

Mayor Jim Kenney promised Wednesday to work closely with the school district to ensure that students stay in classrooms longer.

Kenney and his team are building a community-school model with Chief Education Officer Otis Hackney.

Last year, Kenney pledged to meet face-to-face with school principals on a regular basis to hash out the challenges they face and discuss ways the city might help.

"We found out by speaking to [principals] and going into the schools, is that they have some resources that they've developed on their own, and we don't want to re-create the wheel, we want to know what it is they've developed, how can we enhance it, and what else do they need," said Kenney.

Kenney, Hackney and maybe a dozen school principals gathered together to answer questions from members of the media Wednesday night outside the mayor's office after one of those face-to-face meetings.

"The key word the mayor used was 'enhance,' and I really think he's going to enhance our schools, because our schools are great, but we need to make them even better. He's given us the tools to do that," said Sharon Marino, principal of McClure Elementary School in Hunting Park.

"We talked about facility needs, we talked about resources and staffing needs that we have within our schools and basically developing more partnerships for our schools to provide for support for students and our staff but also for our parents," said Evelyn Nunez principal at Lewis Elkin Elementary School in Kensington.

A spokeswoman for Kenney said no additional cost would be associated with these improvement.

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Imposter priest sold fake pope tix: cops

Mena posed as a priest, officiating at Mass, funerals, confessions and one marriage, police said.

JASON NUCKOLLS
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

Pope Francis GETTY IMAGES

A man posing as a priest who officiated at Mass, funerals, confessions and one marriage was arrested on accusations of having sold fake tickets to see Pope Francis in Philadelphia.

Erwin Mena, 59, faces charges including grand theft and perjury, ABC has reported, adding that he allegedly posed as a Los Angeles priest last year and sold pilgrimage tickets to see the pope during his East Coast visit.

Mena had allegedly been posing as a priest for about 20 years, primarily in Southern California, but vanishing before church authorities could catch him, ABC stated.

"He smiled, talked about how good things were. There was never anything negative," said retired high school teacher Joaquin Oviedo, a parishioner familiar with Mena, in a related Los Angeles Times article. "He was not a fire and brimstone kind of preacher."

"He smiled, talked about how good things were. There was never anything negative. He was not a fire and brimstone kind of preacher."

Retired high school teacher Joaquin Oviedo

Specific to the pope's visit, Mena is suspected of having taken in thousands of dollars in phony ticket sales, according to ABC.

When asked by the L.A. Times to comment on the charges, Mena said, "Not at this time."

Former Philadelphia cop claims police 'violated' him: report

A former Philadelphia police officer has claimed that two cops forcibly entered his house and assaulted him in a mix-up over allegedly stolen pizza and cheesesteaks.

Kevin Booker, 54, a retired Philadelphia police officer, filed a complaint after he alleged that two police officers entered his home on the night of Jan. 8, pushed him onto the ground, handcuffed him and hit the back of his head, Philly.com reported. The officers were accusing him of using fake $10 bills to pay for a cheesesteak and pizza delivery.

"This is the kind of thing that makes it harder for people to trust the police," Booker was quoted in the Philly.com article. "And it makes people like me angry. I used to be a police officer."

One officer searched through his trash and refrigerator, Philly.com stated. Eventually, they uncuffed Booker and left, realizing that he, in fact, had not ordered any food.

"I said, 'I used to be a police officer,' and the one officer said, 'I don't care. It doesn't matter. You probably got fired anyway,'" Booker said in the Philly.com report. Booker eventually tracked down the pizza delivery driver who told him that someone had paid with phony bills on the street in front of his house before taking off with the food.

Because of his treatment by the police, Booker has vowed to sue the department and has hired a civil rights attorney, Philly.com added.

"I think they need to be fired," Booker said to Philly.com. "They didn't do their jobs properly. They violated me."

JASON NUCKOLLS

YouTube

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Japan military on alert over North Korea's planned rocket launch

North Korean notified U.N. agencies of its plan to launch what it called an "earth observation satellite" some time between Feb. 8 and 25.

Japan put its military on alert on Wednesday to shoot down any North Korean rocket that threatens it, while South Korea warned the North it would pay a "severe price" if it goes ahead with a satellite launch that South Korea considers a missile test.

North Korea has said it has a sovereign right to pursue a space program by launching rockets, although the United States and other governments suspect that such launches are in reality tests of its missiles.

"We have defenses ready to deal with all threats, but in view of the announcement I have put the Self Defense Force's Aegis destroyers and our PAC-3 units on alert and issued an order to shoot down any ballistic missile threat," Japan's defense minister, Gen. Nakatani, told media briefing.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said he would work with the United States and others to "strongly demand" that North Korea refrain from what he described as a planned missile launch.

Tension rose in East Asia last month after North Korea's fourth nuclear test, this time of what it said was a hydrogen bomb.

Soldiers walk beside PAC-3 missile launchers as they are seen in position on the grounds of the defence ministry in Tokyo. GETTY IMAGES

A rocket launch coming so soon after the nuclear test would raise concern that North Korea plans to fit nuclear warheads on its missiles, giving it the capability to launch a strike against South Korea, Japan and possibly targets as far away as the West Coast.

North Korea last launched a long-range rocket in December 2012, sending an object it described as a communications satellite into orbit. REUTERS

Ex-drug executive Martin Shkreli has $40M trading loss

Former pharmaceutical executive Martin Shkreli suffered a roughly $40 million drop in the value of a trading account used to secure his bail following his arrest on securities fraud charges, a federal prosecutor said on Wednesday.

At a hearing in federal court in Brooklyn, Assistant U.S. Attorney Winston Paes said the account contained mostly shares of KaloBios Pharmaceuticals Inc., a drug company that Shkreli briefly ran.

KaloBios filed for bankruptcy in December, wiping out most of its equity value. That caused the value of Shkreli's E*Trade brokerage account to drop to $4 million to $5 million, from the $45 million level when it had been frozen, the prosecutor said.

Paes told U.S. District Judge Kiyo Matsumoto

Martin Shkreli GETTY IMAGES

that Shkreli may need to post new assets to secure his $5 million bond, which was issued following the 32-year-old's arrest in December.

Shkreli's new lawyer, Benjamin Brafman, responded, "There's nothing like an indictment to affect the price of shares even if the shares have significant value."

Shkreli's criminal case arose from his prior management of hedge fund MSMB Capital Management and Retrophin Inc., a biopharmaceutical company where he was chief executive before being fired in 2014. REUTERS

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Obama, in mosque visit, says an attack on Islam is an attack on all faiths

President Barack Obama greets attendees in an overflow room after speaking at the Islamic Society of Baltimore, in Windsor Mill, Maryland, on Wednesday. GETTY IMAGES

President Barack Obama visited a U.S. mosque Wednesday and declared that attacks on Islam were an attack on all faiths in a move to counter rhetoric from Donald Trump and other Republican presidential candidates that have alienated Muslims.

"We have to understand that an attack on one faith is an attack on all our faiths," Obama said at a mosque outside Baltimore. "When any religious group is targeted we all have a responsibility to speak up."

Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump has called for a temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States after a California couple who killed 14 people last December were described by authorities as radicalized Muslims inspired by Islamic State militants.

Republicans vying to be the party's candidate for the Nov. 8 presidential election also have argued against Obama's plan to accept 10,000 refugees fleeing Syria's war, saying it raised national security risks.

The president, who is a Christian, said it was important to have more Muslim characters portrayed on television who were not related to national security themes, and he said engagement with Muslim-American communities must not be a cover for surveillance.

REUTERS

"Think of your own church or synagogue or temple, and mosques like this will be very familiar. This is where families come to worship and express their love for God and for each other."

Obama

BRIEF

Trump accuses Cruz of stealing Iowa caucuses through 'fraud'

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump on Wednesday accused rival Ted Cruz of stealing a victory in the Iowa caucuses and called for another vote or nullification of Cruz's win.

Trump, who finished second behind Cruz, lit up Twitter on Wednesday with a series of posts saying the outcome was tainted because the Cruz campaign had deliberately spread misinformation about Trump's stand on Obamacare and an erroneous report that Ben Carson was dropping out of the race.

Trump had gone into Monday's caucus voting ahead of the Texas senator by five percentage points in a key poll but Cruz ended up winning, four points ahead of the New York billionaire.

"Ted Cruz didn't win Iowa, he stole it," Trump (@realDonaldTrump) tweeted. "That is why all of the polls were so wrong and why he got far more votes than anticipated. Bad!"

Several social media users tweeted screengrabs of an alleged deleted tweet from Trump's official account, in which he said Cruz "illegally" stolen the vote.

"Based on the fraud committed by Senator Ted Cruz during the Iowa caucus, either a new election should take place or Cruz results nullified," Trump wrote.

In another tweet, Trump said Cruz had lied about his opinion of President Barack Obama's health care program.

"And finally, Cruz strongly told thousands of caucusgoers [voters] that Trump was strongly in favor of Obamacare and 'choice' — a total lie!" he said.

Cruz had apologized to Carson on Tuesday because of an email from his campaign before the caucuses, which are the crucial first vote in the U.S. presidential nominating process.

"The press is reporting that Dr. Ben Carson is taking time off from the campaign trail after Iowa and making a big announcement next week," the Cruz email read, according to CNN. "Please inform any Carson caucusgoers of this news and urge them to caucus for Ted Cruz."

"Many people voted for Cruz over Carson because of this Cruz fraud," Trump tweeted.

REUTERS

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Like New! — $136/Month

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AWD — $196/Month

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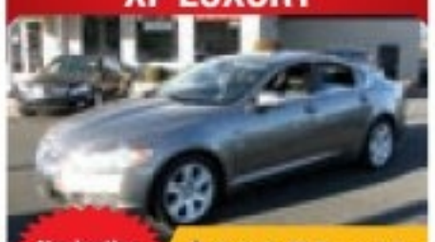

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Yahoo to look at strategic alternatives, cut jobs as it pursues spin-off

Yahoo said it would consider "strategic alternatives" for its core Internet business and cut about 15 percent of its workforce, even as it continues with its plan to revamp the business and spin it off.

The announcement is the strongest sign yet that the board and CEO Marissa Mayer may be willing to sell the struggling Internet business — essentially websites, email and online search — under growing pressure from impatient shareholders.

In an interview with Reuters, Mayer said the company will entertain offers as they come but its first priority is the turnaround plan.

If it receives an offer this year, it was unlikely that the transaction would be completed before the nine- to 12-month timeline projected for the spin-off, she said.

Marissa Mayer GETTY IMAGES

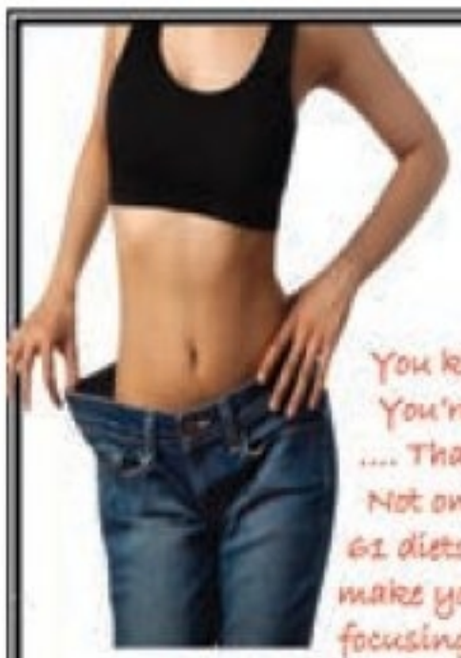
"We would obviously engage but I think the one thing we're trying to do is set our shareholders' expectations in terms of complexity," Mayer said.

The planned restructuring announced on Tuesday includes the closure of offices in five locations, a paring down of products, shifting more resources to mobile search and selling some non-strategic assets such as real estate and patents.

Investors were not immediately impressed, sending Yahoo shares down 1.2 percent after hours. They have now fallen 36 percent over the past 12 months.

"We believe the strategic plan does not fully address the core issues which have destroyed shareholder value – poor capital allocation, bad strategic partnerships, out of control spending and a bloated workforce," said New York-based SpringOwl Asset Management, a shareholder which has called for changes at the company.

REUTERS



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Hilary Duff is officially single

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Two years after announcing their split, Hilary Duff and Mike Comrie's divorce has been finalized. TMZ obtained legal documents outlining all the details. The pair will have joint custody over their 3-year-old son, Luca. Plus, Duff owes Comrie a $2.4 million settlement. She'll be the one to keep their Beverly Hills mansion, while he gets two cars — a Mercedes and a Bentley. Back in January 2014, Duff's rep said this about the split: "They remain best friends and will continue to be in each other's lives. They are dedicated to loving and parenting their amazing son, and ask for privacy at this time." Since this means Duff is officially back on the market, we're totally rooting for her to wind up with former "Lizzie McGuire" co-star Adam Lamberg. Lizzie and Gordo forever.

Selena Gomez is 'so done' with Bieber

Anyone still hoping for a Jelena reunion should give up those dreams ASAP. In the March issue of W magazine, Selena Gomez admits she's totally over ex Justin Bieber. Gomez says, "I'm so exhausted. I honestly am so done. I care about his health and well-being. But I can't do it anymore." The "Same Old Love" singer shared what it's like having her love life in the spotlight. "At first I didn't care," Gomez tells the magazine. "To me, it was: I'm 18, I have a boyfriend, we look cute together, we like that. Then I got my heart broken and I cared. Because people had no idea what was going on." Given all the times the pair supposedly broke up and made up between 2011 and 2015, it was pretty confusing to follow along. Since Gomez, Bieber has been rumored to be dating Hailey Baldwin and hooking up with Kourtney Kardashian, although neither relationship was confirmed and both seemingly fizzled out. And Gomez was last reported to be cozying up with Niall Horan. Is it crazy we still think they're not officially done?

Wiz Khalifa says 'everything's cool' with Kanye West

The music world can stop bracing for another schism — the Kanye West-Wiz Khalifa feud is officially dunzo. West first called a truce when tweeting Tuesday: "Me and Wiz spoke yesterday. Great convo. All positive." Then, Khalifa cleared the air even more during a radio interview. The "See You Again" rapper told Power 105.1, "I think everybody was [surprised] but it's cool, everything's cool, we spoke, it's all good. … I accept his apology." He also acknowledged the Kim Kardashian and Amber Rose selfie that got everyone talking. Khalifa said, "Her and Kim spoke and they're all good, too." Does this mean a double date is on the horizon? Fingers crossed. When the talk show host commended him on how he handled the whole debacle, Khalifa joked, "I'm like the Bob Marley of this." Definitely a fitting analogy.

Kanye West
Me and Wiz spoke yesterday. Great convo. All positive.

Ru Paul
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Teresa Palmer and Ben Walker explain 'Netflix and chill'

GETTY IMAGES

The stars of "The Choice" discuss an ideal Valentine's Day.

RACHEL RACZKA
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rachel.raczka@metro.us

Teresa Palmer and Ben Walker's characters in "The Choice," out this weekend, fall in love over banter, repeating the film's signature line — "You bother me" — to a frenzy of lust over the course of a decade. The Nicolas Sparks adaptation naturally leads to tragedy and some tough conversations (and *choices*), ones this writer will leave for our critic to decipher the depth of on a later page.

Palmer, 29, has plenty ahead of her, including the star-studded "Triple 9," while Walker, 33, is naturally headed back to Broadway as Patrick Bateman in Duncan Sheik's musical adaptation of "American Psycho." For now, the actors are enjoying a Tuesday morning attempting to cast themselves in their own season of "True Detective."

Did you guys read Nicholas Sparks' novel before the film?

TP: No, but I've seen all the movies. His formula works so well, and I think people love it is because they feel connected to the characters. They're not these perfect child's version of human beings. They have flaws. The way we get together in this movie is that, I'm in a relationship. There's infidelity, it's messy. It gets dark at points, and that's life. I love that he doesn't try and sugarcoat it.

BW: Yeah. There's a reason they call it falling in love. It's about tripping and slapping your face on the ground.

Were you big "The Notebook" fans?

TP: "The Notebook" was everything for me. I had the stationary. I had the Noah and Allie posters on my wall. I still, like two years ago, was listening to the soundtrack on my way to auditions. Like for more emotional ones. I would get in the zone by listening to "The Notebook" music.

Do you have any big Valentine's Day plans?

BW: Very excited about seeing "The Choice" this Valentine's Day.

Are you really?

BW: No, I'd never see my own movie on Valentine's Day…

TP: I totally am. I'm going on Valentine's Day and I've already organized it with people.

BW: Well we're pretty much like a Netflix and chill kind of a couple. Best Valentine's Day: I cook, we do Netflix on the couch, pajamas, snuggle town.

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U-Haul Moving & Storage of Philadelphia
314-322 N 13th St., Philadelphia, PA 19107 • Auction Date: 2/23/16 Time: 11:30 am
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U-Haul Moving & Storage of Chester
1600 Highland Ave., Chester, PA 19013 • Auction Date: 2/24/16 Time: 11:30 am
KEYA BIAS 118, STEPHANIE BARTLEY 221, ANTHONY DICICCIO 242, BARBARA MIELCAREK 265, CARRIE TAYLOR 277, JENIEVE BENNETT-GILL 304, HERBERT MCDUFFY JR 317, MALIKA TRUSTY 349, CARMEN SCOTT 367, SIERRA JONES 381, QUINTON JONES 430, STEPHEN SERAFINO 443, LAVELLE HOLMAN 451, KELLY LEWIS 469, LAKISHA MORGAN 501, OMAR MILES 502, KEYA BIAS 529, ASHBY TRAMMELL 530, LESLIE MEAD 544, LYDIA ELAM 571, SHLEAH MCKIETHAN 585, JOSEPH BOBBETT 589, JANIE LEWIS 592, PARTHENIA BETHAY 610, LATISHIA LOGAN 611, NIKKEEM BLACK 639, ROBERTA SEALS 640, LYNESHA TUCKER-DAY 687, KIARRA COLLINS 691, NICOLE SCARPATO 724, AUDREY RIOS 734, PAUL HAMMOND 801, JAYLIN CLARK 809, JONATHAN SKURSHA 810, ABDULLAH FITZGERALD 813, IMYRRAH ELAM 818, LULA BYNOG 819, RODRIQUEZ BRINSON 835, KENNARD GREENE 836, JOVINE BOBBITT 838, FULAH WADE 845, NEPHRITINA FRIERSON 856, RIVERA MARTINEZ 859, CHRISTOPHER BURTON 875

U-Haul Moving & Storage of South Philadelphia
1015-25 S 12th St., Philadelphia, PA 19147 • Auction Date: 2/22/16 Time: 12:00 pm
JAMEL HOOKER 0002, MICHAEL DAVID ZULLI JR 0007, EDNA JONES 0009, NORVIC MCKENDRICK 0011, TERESA BELL 0013, ALVIN DUHART 0025, DELORES BROWN 0035, HOPE PRECISE 0038, MARCIA SMITH 0117, JOEY GOODAVAGE 0124, WILFORD SWINDELL SHAMLIN III 0134, ARVEITA LOMAX 0144, GREGORY TRIPPETT 0186, NAZARET PECLESAMBET 0247, JOSEPH BUTLER 0251, RONALD D LANCASTER 0262, GILES LETLOUGH 0321, FRANCIS NORMAN 0355, ASHLEY JEFFERSON 0380, ANTHONY PIAZZA 0392, MONIQUE MACK-WORRELL 0413R, CENTER CITY REAL ESTATE COMPANY 0421, JACQUELINE OVERTON 0422, MAURICIO RUIZ-LLANOS 0437, LEWIS WILLIAMS 0447, DWIGHT RODGERS 0455, SHAWN QUINN 0551, ALBERT DIXON 0636, ALLEN WATSON 0702, NIKIA FERGUSON 0714, DONALD FARMER 0728, MATHEW MCHALE 0807, SARAAB SABREE 0810, NANCY GATINEAU 0811, ANN ONYEABOR 0842, MONIQUE LORI HOWELL 1401, CENTER CITY REAL ESTATE COMPANY 1513, STEVEN JHONSON 1621, CASSANDRA HAYES 1635, JESSICA ROSEN 1637, JOY BOSTIC 2012, MARCO SCAPAGNINI 2118, LACORA EMERSON 2302, CASSANDRA HAYES 3018, SHANNA S FRAZIER 3119, JIM CROWLEY 3231, WILFORD SWINDELL SHAMLIN III 4227, THOMAS FISHER 4300, JOHN PICCOLI 5012, ADRIAN PINTEA 5107, EDWARD CHACON JR 5124, RUSSELL HAROLD 5320, SHERRY KRAMER 5411, STEPHEN MILLER L106, PATRICK M LAURINAITIS L119, ANDREW HIRSCH L165

U-Haul Moving & Storage of Overbrook
6141 Lancaster Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19151 • Auction Date: 2/24/16 Time: 9:00 am
BRIAN WALLS JR 1024, CHAVON MERKERSON 1114, DAVID JACOBS 1120, GILBERT ROGERS 1202, TYRONE WARD 1220, LESLIE MIMS 1222, JOHN DODSON 1223, CYNTHIA SO 1236, BERNARD SCOTT 1253, KEITH BUNCH 1511, WADEEYAH FIELDS-MCNEIL 1603, FARAAD COSTON 1638, SHALIYAH COLE 1642

U-Haul Moving & Storage of Malvern
564 Lancaster Pike., Malvern, PA 19355 • Auction Date: 2/23/16 Time: 9:00 am
JAMES MCCOY 1017, LOUIS KNECHT 1035, MARIO TURNER 1233, JILL NANCE 1247, CHARLES MICTHELL 1253, BO KIMBLE 1273, CHRISTIAN BUTLER 1281, JENNIFER GREY 1304, PETER SARVIS 1332

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Walker and Palmer are hot and "bothered." LIONSGATE/DANA HAWLEY

But what are you watching on Netflix?
TP: I'm not just on Netflix, because I do like "The Affair" on Showtime. It's the best show ever. If you haven't seen it, you're going to binge watch the first two seasons.
BW: And "Luther," I'm telling you now. You have to start "Luther." It's like a British "True Detective."

You guys would be a good "True Detective" pair.
BW: That's exactly what we should do.
TP: Oh my god. Totally.
BW: They're secretly in love. She's the detective and I'm like the guy who's following her around who's got a chip on his shoulder.
TP: See, he's a feminist
BW: He trusts his gut, but she knows the procedure.
TP: She does.
BW: He's shooting from the hip and she's like, "You're suspended. Give me that badge."
TP: Done. Let's pitch it right now. HBO and it's done.
BW: And we've both got mysterious tattoos.
TP: Yeah and we're actually not really humans.

It's a twist!
BW: Cut. Why aren't you writing this down?

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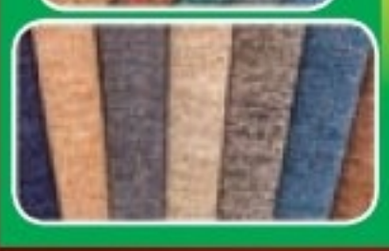

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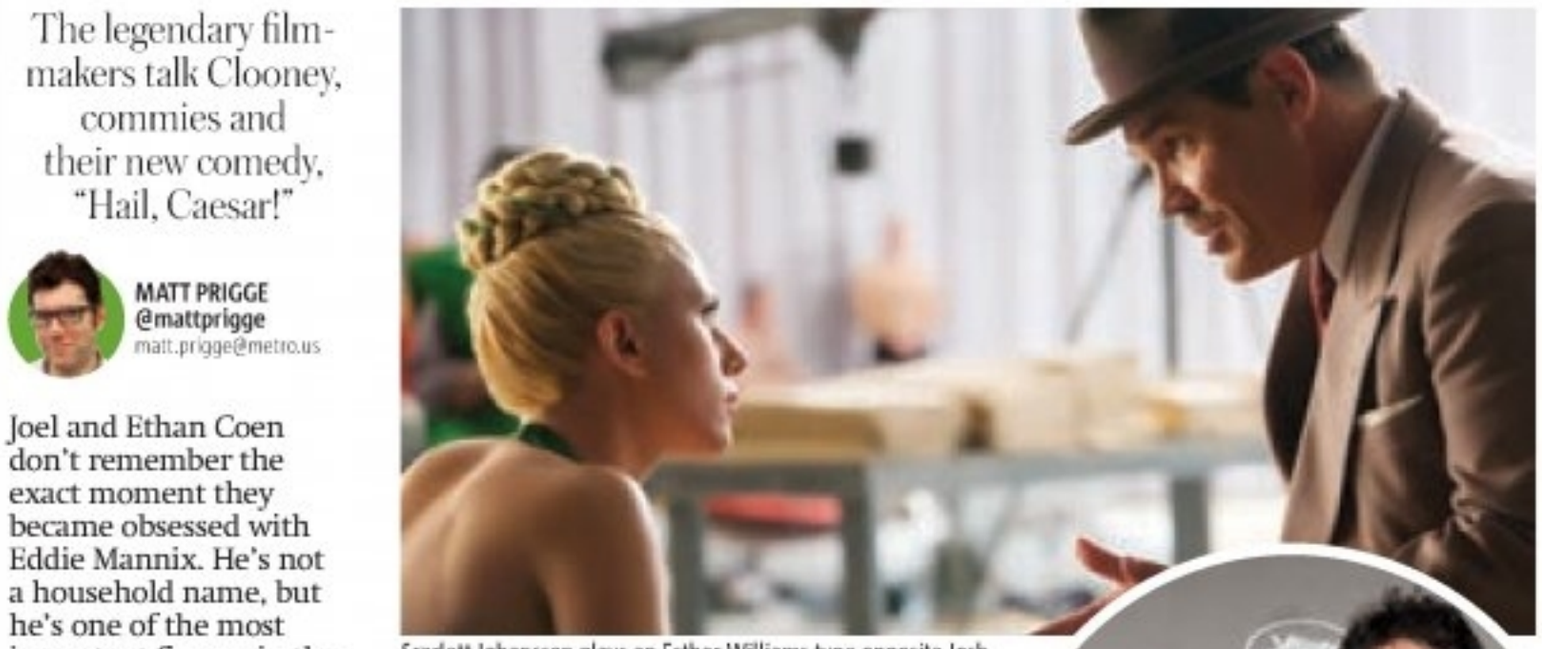
Inside the Coen brothers

The legendary filmmakers talk Clooney, commies and their new comedy, "Hail, Caesar!"



Scarlett Johansson plays an Esther Williams-type opposite Josh Brolin's Eddie Mannix in the Coen brothers' "Hail, Caesar!" ALISON

MATT PRIGGE
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Joel and Ethan Coen don't remember the exact moment they became obsessed with Eddie Mannix. He's not a household name, but he's one of the most important figures in the Golden Age of Hollywood: a "fixer" for MGM who would help cover up scandals, including ones involving sex, rape, even murder. The latest from the filmmakers, 61 and 58, respectively, is "Hail, Caesar!", set in 1950s Hollywood. Josh Brolin plays a softer, fictionalized version of Mannix: He still solves untold problems, including the kidnapping of a movie star (George Clooney), but he goes to confession, is nice to his wife and is even trying to quit smoking — all unlike the real deal.

What was the motivation for including a character named Eddie Mannix who isn't exactly Eddie Mannix?

Ethan Coen: Our idea for this, which is maybe 15 years old, was here's this guy who's a fixer for the studio. We give him the name "Eddie Mannix" because it's just a great name. But the real person wasn't much like our character. He's the squarest hero ever. We thought we'd do a day in the life of his problems, and then we left it at that for many years. We just sat on the premise. We actually mentioned it to George Clooney way back when, and he kept announcing it to the press that this was his next movie, for some reason.

The film seems to be set in the early '50s, but there's a bit about communist screenwriters that seems it might have been lifted in from the late '40s, when the blacklist started. I could be wrong.

EC: You're kind of wrong. Communism was still an issue then.

Joel Coen: It is a little bit of a mixture. However, in 1950, 1951 the House Un-American Activities Committee was still in full-swing. McCarthy hadn't even happened yet. The blacklisting was still happening.

What made you want to include them as the people who've kidnapped Clooney's character?

JC: It amused us that they were writers, for one thing. It amused us they were communists, for another. And it further amused us that the Clooney character would so readily embrace that ideology.

GETTY IMAGES

Our top 5 Coens

1. "Barton Fink" (1991)
2. "Blood Simple' (1984)
3. "Burn After Reading" (2008)
4. "Miller's Crossing" (1990)
5. "A Serious Man" (2009)

It's funny that he's so far removed from real life that when he's exposed to what they preach, he has to admit what they're saying is right on.

EC: That's the dangerous thing about commies: They have a few good points.

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The epic tale of 'Cold Mountain'

Grammy winner Jennifer Higdon brings her new opera home to Philly.

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The ensemble cast of "Cold Mountain" ALL PHOTOS KEN HOWARD FOR SANTA FE OPERA

Jennifer Higdon pulled book after book off of her shelves looking for the story she wanted to tell with her first opera. It only took revisiting a few pages of "Cold Mountain" before she knew she'd hit the jackpot. First and foremost, she points out with a laugh, the novel amply satisfied opera's two most important criteria: "People fall in love and people die."

Beyond that, Charles Frazier's National Book Award-winning novel, following a wounded Confederate deserter in Civil War-era Appalachia, also resonated with the composer's own Smoky Mountains upbringing. "Part of my childhood was spent in East Tennessee, in the same area," Higdon says. "Cold Mountain is on the eastern side of the Smokies and I lived on a farm on the edge of the western side. The terrain, the people, the language, the speech patterns and the rhythm of life felt so familiar that since I was venturing into a new genre, I thought maybe I should start with a story that has that familiarity."

A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where she now teaches composition, Higdon has been based in Philadelphia for more than 30 years, during which time she's become one of the leading voices of modern classical music. She's won both a Pulitzer Prize and a Grammy Award, and was seeking a new challenge when she undertook her first opera. "Cold Mountain" premiered last August at Santa Fe Opera, and arrives at the Academy of Music this weekend for its East Coast premiere.

Bringing the epic story to the Academy stage has brought its share of offstage drama as well, as star baritone Nathan Gunn bowed out due to a family illness just last week, replaced by up-and-coming singer Jarrett Ott, who sang the role when Higdon work-shopped the first act at Curtis in 2012. "I can't imagine a better situation if you have to have something like this go down," Higdon says. "It's an exciting time, because this is the kind of break that every artist waits for."

Higdon's neo-Romantic score incorporates the sounds of period folk music, from soldier's bugle calls to fiddle laments and even touches of bluegrass — a genre that Higdon previously explored in her "Concerto 4-3," premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra and string trio Time For Three. "There's no doubt that it's an American opera," she says.

'Cold Mountain'

Feb. 5-14
Academy of Music
240 S. Broad St.
215-893-1018
www.operaphila.org

Isabel Leonard (Ada) and now-absent Nathan Gunn (Inman)

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Slice

things to do

WHERE TO EAT, DRINK & PLAY

15 Things you'll want to eat, drink and do for Super Bowl 50

The best parts of the big game are all the food and parties that go along with it.

ALLIE VOLPE
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

Eat

1 Indulge in **Slice's (1740 Sansom St., 1180 S. 10th St.)** whopping Super Bowl Sunday pie, topped with mozzarella, cheddar, ground beef and caramelized onions.

2 Fill up on a budget at **Manny Brown's (512 South St.)** with 40-cent wings and $2.75 Miller Lite pints all day long.

3 **Luke Palladino's East Passyunk Italian steakhouse (1934 E. Passyunk Ave.)** will have deals on food and drink with oysters casino going for $5, wood grilled burger deluxe with fries being offered for $10 and Sicilian pork BBQ for $12. Drink up with $3 Peroni drafts, $4 Yards, Victory and Dogfish, $5 house wines by the glass and $7 selection of specialty cocktails.

4 Five bucks gets you a choice of roast beef and roast pork sandwiches, sliders, nacho mac and cheese bites, chicken fingers and mozzarella sticks at **Nick's Roast Beef (16 S. Second St.)**. Drinks will cost you $3 for domestic drafts and $10 for buckets. Things get going at 6 p.m.

Drink

5 Get your hands on a $5 SuperMug at **McGillin's (1310 Drury St.)** and enjoy $1 refills of Bud Light all night.

6 Down domestic drafts to your heart's content at **Tavern on Broad (Broad and Walnut Streets)** from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. RSVP to neinal@tavernonbroad.com.

7 Come to **Taproom on 19th (2400 S. 19th St.)** for the $2.50 Miller High Life, stay for the other drink specials and half-off wings.

McGillin's ALL PHOTOS PROVIDED

8 With more than 35 HDTVs, **Field House (1150 Filbert St.)** will be the place to be — so get there early. They open at 11:30 a.m.

Do

9 For $50, take in the game on **Brauhaus Schmitz's (718 South St.)** big screen while taking advantage of bottomless beer specials and a buffet of pork rinds, roast beef, meatballs, wings and more. Starts 30 minutes before first whistle.

10 A similar deal applies to the South Philly **Chickie's & Pete's (1526 Packer Ave.)** where an all-you-can-eat smorgasbord of crabfries, sandwiches, wings, nachos, cheesesteaks, pizza, domestic drafts, pitchers and more will be available during the game.

11 Bring the kids to **Blue Cross RiverRink Winterfest (101 S. Columbus Blvd.)** for a family-friendly Super Bowl screening starting at 6:30 p.m. Grownups can sip $4 drafts while the little ones ice skate.

12 **Ruba Club (416 Green St.)** is hosting a potluck, so bring your best game-day dish and watch the game on the big screen. The free party starts at 6 p.m.

Order out

13 Let **Di Bruno Bros. (multiple locations)** handle the catering for your Super Bowl party. With different charcuterie, cheese, dip and appetizer packages, you'll be throwing the ultimate bash.

14 Treat your guests to a BBQ delight from **Fette Sau (1208 Frankford Ave.)** comprising of enough beef brisket, mac and cheese, chili and ribs to feed 10. Call 215-391-4888 to place your order.

15 **Caviar and Distrito (3945 Chestnut St.)** are teaming up for a taco tailgate. Order here and get enough salsa, guac, chicken and beef tacos and rice and beans to feed either four or eight. Order by Friday.

5 Valentine's Day Reservations to Make Now

Because the time to hesitate is through.

MONICA WEYMOUTH
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

Technically, you have a bit of time to make Valentine's Day plans. (Gentle and hopefully unnecessary reminder: The big day is Feb. 14.) However, if a romantic dinner in the city is on your agenda, you'll want to make reservations now. Here are some of your best bets, from fine dining to finer French fries.

Sbraga

440 S. Broad St., www.sbragadining.com
Valentine's Day weekend is shaping up to be super tasty at Sbraga, which is offering both a four-course ($55) and six-course ($75) menu on Feb. 13 and 14. Special additions include Blue Point oysters with smoked crème fraiche and caviar, lobster gnocchi and a pork chop for two that might test your love. Looking for something a little more relaxed? Chef Kevin Sbraga's other outlet, The Fat Ham (3131 Walnut St.), is serving their usual Sunday supper menu, which features nine cozy Southern dishes for just $30.

Little Nonna's

1234 Locust St., Littlenonnas.com
You can never really go wrong with Italian, but you especially can't go wrong with Italian on Valentine's Day. (We don't make the rules – blame it on "Lady and The Tramp.") Cozy-chic hot spot Little Nonna's is serving up a four-course ($55) menu starring dishes such as truffled steak tartar, red wine-braised osso bucco and pistachio-olive oil cannoli. As for the vegetarians, they have you covered with beet ravioli in sage brown butter.

Sbraga PROVIDED

Marigold Kitchen

501 S. 45th St., Marigoldkitchenbyob.com
Marigold Kitchen is big on surprises, so while we can't tell you exactly what their 13 - 15 course menu will look like on Valentine's Day — or on any day, for that matter — we can say that you won't regret snagging one of the BYOB's highly-coveted tables. If your date has never been, prepare for major swooning as they realize the ridiculously charming West Philly twin house is, in fact, the restaurant they keep hearing about.

Fork

306 Market St., Forkrestaurant.com
No idea where to go for Valentine's Day? Do yourself a favor and make a reservation at Fork. The revered Old City standby knows exactly what they're doing, and not even Valentine's Day — not even Mother's Day brunch — can change that. Highlights from the four-course ($99) menu include sweet Amalia oysters, branzino en croute and an "Italian Breakfast" panettone that you'd be more than happy to wake up next to.

The Good King Tavern

614 S. 7th St., Thegoodkingtavern.com
Your friends in Bella Vista don't want you to know about the Good King Tavern because your friends in Bella Vista are jerks. This French-inspired gem disguised as a humble neighborhood nook is rolling out a four-course prixe-fixe ($65), which is a steal when you factor in their bargain wine list. It'll be hard to choose just four dishes, but don't worry — you'll be back soon. (That said, order a side of the truffle Parmesan fries just in case.)

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Listings

MUSIC

The Bacon Brothers

Thursday, 8 p.m.
Union Transfer
1026 Spring Garden St.
From $35, www.therailpark.org
The Bacon Brothers band, made up, of course, of Kevin Bacon and his brother Michael, play a benefit concert for the first phase of construction of the Viaduct Rail Park. The park is slated to be a three-mile walking and nature path that connects the city's neighborhoods.

Allan Rayman, LOLO, Mothers and Thee Idea Men

Thursday, 7 p.m.
Milkboy
1100 Chestnut St.
From $5,
www.milkboyphilly.com
This eclectic mix of national acts make up this month's Communion Residency, a showcase for emerging musicians of many genres. Taking inspiration from the UK's Communion Club Nights, these artists are selected for their talent, diversity and complementary styles.

Barakka

Thursday, 8 p.m.
Franky Bradley's
1320 Chancellor St.
From $7,
www.frankybradleys.com
This Philly-based Turkish folk-rock group mixes acoustic and traditional Turkish music and Andalou rock with the more electric Western influences of Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin, playing original, traditional and cover songs.

Emily Wells

Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Boot & Saddle
From $10,
www.bootandsaddlephilly.com
1131 S. Broad St.
Classically-trained violinist Emily Wells is an experimental performer known for her deft mixing of modern and classical music, using acoustic instruments, synthesizers and looping to create a layered and unique sound. Her latest album was released just last week.

Carole King Songbook

Friday through Feb. 7
Verizon Hall
300 S. Broad St.
From $35,
www.kimmelcenter.org
Tony-nominated singer Liz Callaway performs some of Carole Kings' greatest songs from the '60s and '70s. Michael Krajewski conducts the Philly POPS Orchestra as they weave King's hits, as well a few other favorites from the era, into a medley of recognizable and well-loved songs.

ART

"A Million Stories" opening reception

Friday, 6 p.m.
InLiquid Art and Design
910 N. 2nd St.
Free, www.inliquid.org
Philly photographer Amurri Lauren has an eye for harsh beauty, key moments of understanding and an intuition for finding wisdom in the mundane. The photographs of "A Million Stories" focus on urban life and pop culture.

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DANCE

Ballet Hispanico

Friday through Feb. 6
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This contemporary dance ensemble performs classic and modern choreography set to Latin music, fusing elements of traditional Hispanic dance and arts with modern elements for a theatrical take on what it means to be Hispanic and to be an artist in today's society.

PAULA LOBO

and Longing"

Thursday through Feb. 7
Merriam Theater
250 S. Broad St.
From $29,
www.kimmelcenter.org

This abstract ballet features dance from four choreographers set to contemporary jazz, percussion and Benjamin Britten's "String Quartet No. 1." The combination of modern choreography and classical music gives this performance a nuanced, emotional context meant to explore the state of the modern artist.

FOOD

Wing Bowl

Friday, 6 a.m.
Wells Fargo Center
$10,
www.wingbowl.cbslocal.com

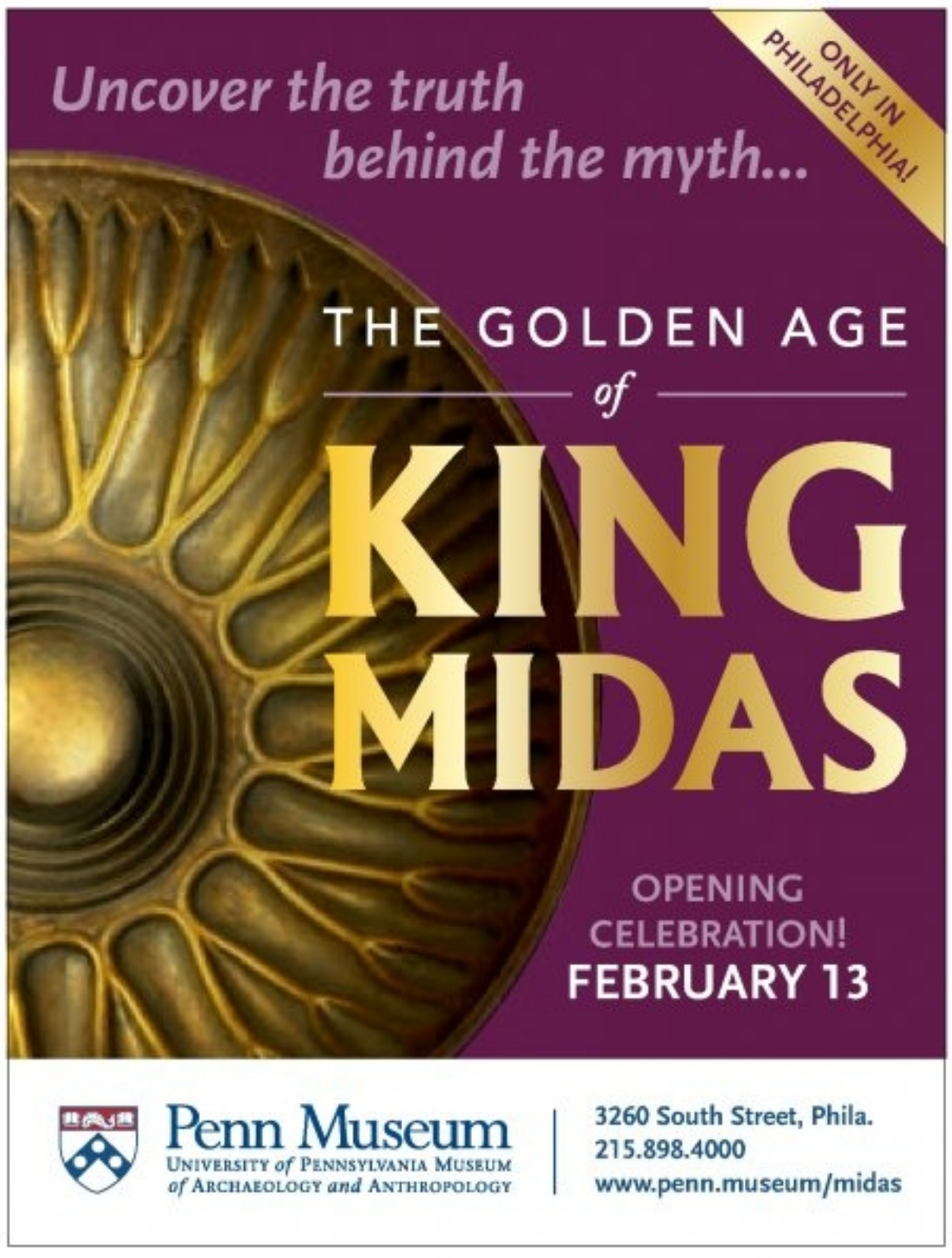
If you're looking to get weird at 6 a.m. on a Friday morning, your time has come. The 24th annual Wing Bowl, subtitled this year as "Game of Bones," returns with its infamous wing eating contest and Wingettes. In case you were still worried about this being a little too basic, Dennis Rodman makes a headlining appearance.

Mardi Gras party

Friday, 6:30 p.m.
Old Pine Community Center
401 Lombard St.
From $12,
oldpinecommunitycenter.org

The Old Pine Community Center is a staple of South Philly, creating outreach programs for kids, seniors and the homeless. Their annual Mardi Gras party and silent auction benefits these continuing programs, and features New Orleans-inspired food and drinks, as well as games and live music.

SYDNEY DUPRIEST



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5 Reasons to visit Venice this winter

Venice Carnival JP BENNETT

Take advantage of the low season.

Fodor's Travel

Winter isn't exactly peak season for tourism in Venice — and that's exactly why it's the best time for you to visit. Unlike summer, when the city belongs to out-of-towners, La Serenissima in winter is serene. If the mist-shrouded canals and melancholy romance aren't enough of a draw, rooms at luxe hotels like The Gritti Palace and the Baglioni Hotel Luna are available for a fraction of their high-season rates, while landmarks like St. Mark's Basilica sit blissfully empty. Sure, Venice is enchanting any time of year—but go now, while you can have it all to yourself.

Venice Carnival

From Jan. 23 through Feb. 9, La Serenissima sloughs off its winter gloom and comes alive for Carnival, an annual open-air festival that fills the city with music, dancing and masked partygoers. There are events every day—from colorful boat parades on the banks of Cannaregio to masquerade balls. Also not to be missed: the King's Banquet, a nightly feast held at Venice's magnificent historic shipyard, Arsenale (tickets must be booked in advance).

Campo San Polo Ice Rink

Every winter, from December until the end of Carnival, Venice's largest square, Campo San Polo, is turned into a gigantic ice-skating rink. The ovoid rink, which can accommodate up to 200 skaters, is flanked by market stalls selling food, mulled wine, and local arts and crafts. A day pass to the rink is quite reasonable for Venice: €10 for adults and €8 for children, with rental skates included. Pro tip: Visit after dark to avoid the crowds and skate amid the glittering city lights.

Caffè Florian

Being Italy's oldest coffee house, opened in 1720, the iconic Caffè Florian is worth visiting any time of year. But during the chilly, dark days of winter, its plush red velvet banquettes and warm ambiance are especially enticing. What you're here for is the hot chocolate: It's thick, creamy and ganache-like, served in a porcelain cup with biscotti for dipping.

St. Mark's Basilica

There's no denying the magnificence of St. Mark's Basilica, Italy's most famous Byzantine cathedral, even when it's packed with tourists. But in the off-season, when it's deserted? Downright magical. You don't have to line up for hours for a peek at its glittering cupolas and priceless relics, or fight through a suffocating crush of tourists to admire the lavish, gem-studded Pala d'Oro high altar.

Gondola rides

Winter is actually the most romantic time to hop on board a gondola. From December through February, the canals are hauntingly quiet, shrouded in mist and illuminated by soft, hazy winter light. Steer clear of the congested Grand Canal, which is best seen by the cheaper traghetti ferries anyway, and head for the gondola stops along the small, narrow side canals for a more authentic experience. Bonus: Being low season, it's much easier to broker a lower price with your gondolier (you can likely knock €5 to €10 off the steep €80 average for a 30-minute ride). KRISANNE FORDHAM

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Super Bowl prop bets: Bet on a quick Gaga, and no earthquake

We break down the best prop bets leading up to this year's event.

EVAN MACY
@evan_macy
evan.macy@metro.us

Money will be bet on the Super Bowl. A lot of it.

By any measure it's one of the most action-packed sports betting days on the calendar and, luckily, you can bet on a lot more than the winner and the loser this weekend. Whether it's in a Vegas casino or with a buddy over a case of beer, we've singled out some of the most interesting, outrageous and lucrative prop bets you can make on Super Bowl 50.

National anthem length: 2:20

We are taking the under. The tendency is usually to take the over with the assumption that the anthemist — in this case Lady Gaga — will milk it and take her time. But the adrenaline factor is a palpable one and forces a singer to speed up a bit. **Our pick:** Under

Manning passing yards: 235.5

Peyton Manning has not been posting the inflated numbers he did earlier in his career, and the over-under is pretty spot on based on his performance this season. However, we expect the Panthers to have the lead in this one, which would create a lot more passing for Denver in this one. He'll eclipse the over. **Our pick:** Over

Peyton Manning may wave so long to the NFL right after Sunday's game. GETTY IMAGES

Miller sacks: .5

There has been quite some hype about Miller rushing Cam Newton during the ramp-up to the Super Bowl. But we think Miller (who had 11 sacks during the regular season) and the Broncos' NFL-leading defense will find a way to get its hands on Newton, agility and all. **Our pick:** Over

Curry's outfit

There are a lot of bets unrelated to the outcome of the game and this is one of our favorites. North Carolina native and Panthers fan Stephen Curry will be at the game and in full Carolina garb. What will he be wearing? Personalized Carolina Steph Curry jersey: even-money; Cam Newton jersey: +300; any other Carolina jersey: +500; no jersey: +200. **Our pick:** Newton jersey — he's the MVP front-runner after all.

Will there be an earthquake during the game?

This one pays 1,000-1. San Francisco is on the San Andreas Fault. The payout would be astronomical for a win, but we aren't rooting for a natural disaster during the Super Bowl. **Our pick:** Please, God, no.

Will Manning announce his retirement?

We are guessing that he won't. While we think he'll retire, he'll probably need to give it some thought before announcing publicly. If he wins, the likelihood is higher he will call it quits, but if Manning loses we can't imagine he'll retire in defeat. **Our pick:** No (-1000)

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Eagles switch to 4-3 is main reason why Curry re-signed

Without Jim Schwartz as defensive coordinator, Vinny Curry would likely have tested free agent market.

EVAN MACY
@evan_macy
evan.macy@metro.us

Vinny Curry should expect to have a lot more playing time in 2016.) GETTY IMAGES

Vinny Curry has a lot of potential. He's had a lot of potential for his entire career, ever since he was drafted by Andy Reid in the second round of the 2012 draft.

The Eagles are finally looking to cash in on Curry's potential, announcing a monster, $47.25 million deal Wednesday afternoon for a 27-year-old defensive end who has only played 35 percent of defensive snaps.

"I really can't see myself playing anywhere else," Curry, who had 3.5 sacks in 2015, said. "At the end of the day I bleed green, that's just what it is."

Under Chip Kelly and Billy Davis, Curry was a change-of-pace pass-rusher in the 3-4 defense, a style he never played prior and is not particularly fond of. He split time with another Eagles free agent, Cedric Thornton, who appears to likely become an unrestricted free agent this spring.

Hailing from Neptune, New Jersey, just 90 minutes from South Philly, Curry really wanted to stay with the Birds. But the hiring of Jim Schwartz as defensive coordinator and a change to the 4-3 defense is the biggest reason he's sticking around until 2020 (if he plays out his entire five-year deal).

"He's going to put me in a position to do what I love to do, it's golden for me," Curry said of Schwartz.

So, with such a big deal it is safe to assume Curry will be the starter opposite Fletcher Cox (who could be the next contract the Eagles announce) at defensive end, right?

"Every year I tell myself, 'You're gonna be a starter this year.' I said it again in Year 5," he told the media Wednesday. "That's the way I prepare, that's the way I train, it's good for the room it's good for competition. But at the end of the day you have to beat some guys out."

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Temple hauls in 24 recruits on National Signing Day

The Owls continue to ride a wave of success after their best season in years.

EVAN MACY
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Matt Rhule is quite happy with the newest group of incoming Owls. GETTY IMAGES

Ever since the Owls completed their impressive 10-4 season with a loss in the Boca Raton Bowl in December, Temple fans were excited to see if their newfound success would translate into a top-notch recruiting class.

Addressing the media Wednesday, Owls head coach Matt Rhule said that the 2015 campaign — which saw the team nationally ranked for much of the year, saw two sellouts and saw "ESPN College GameDay" set up shop in Old City — had a big impact on impressing recruits.

"A significant amount [would not be here if not for the successful season], Rhule said. "At the end of the day, down the stretch, a lot of people try to take our kids, but it's OK, we try to take theirs. A lot of kids sat in the stands at the Penn State game, the Notre Dame game, the Memphis game and saw all the things Tyler [Matekevich] was able to do, and they see that this is a big time program thanks to the things last year's team completed."

Temple announced formal commitments from 24 players from eight states, with nine of those players hailing from Pennsylvania.

"I feel like we've addressed some needs," Rhule said. "We've gotten faster and we have made some inroads in Pennsylvania. This year is probably the strongest we've done in Philadelphia. I am excited about what we have done."

The Owls also have a hot up-and-coming program. One that Rhule — who signed a six-year contract extension earlier this winter — says more or less can recruit for itself.

"At the end of the day the most important thing is our players our are greatest ambassadors," he said. "They see the players playing in All-Star games, going to the NFL combine. They see players in our program having success and they want to have that success as well. It's easy recruiting at Temple."

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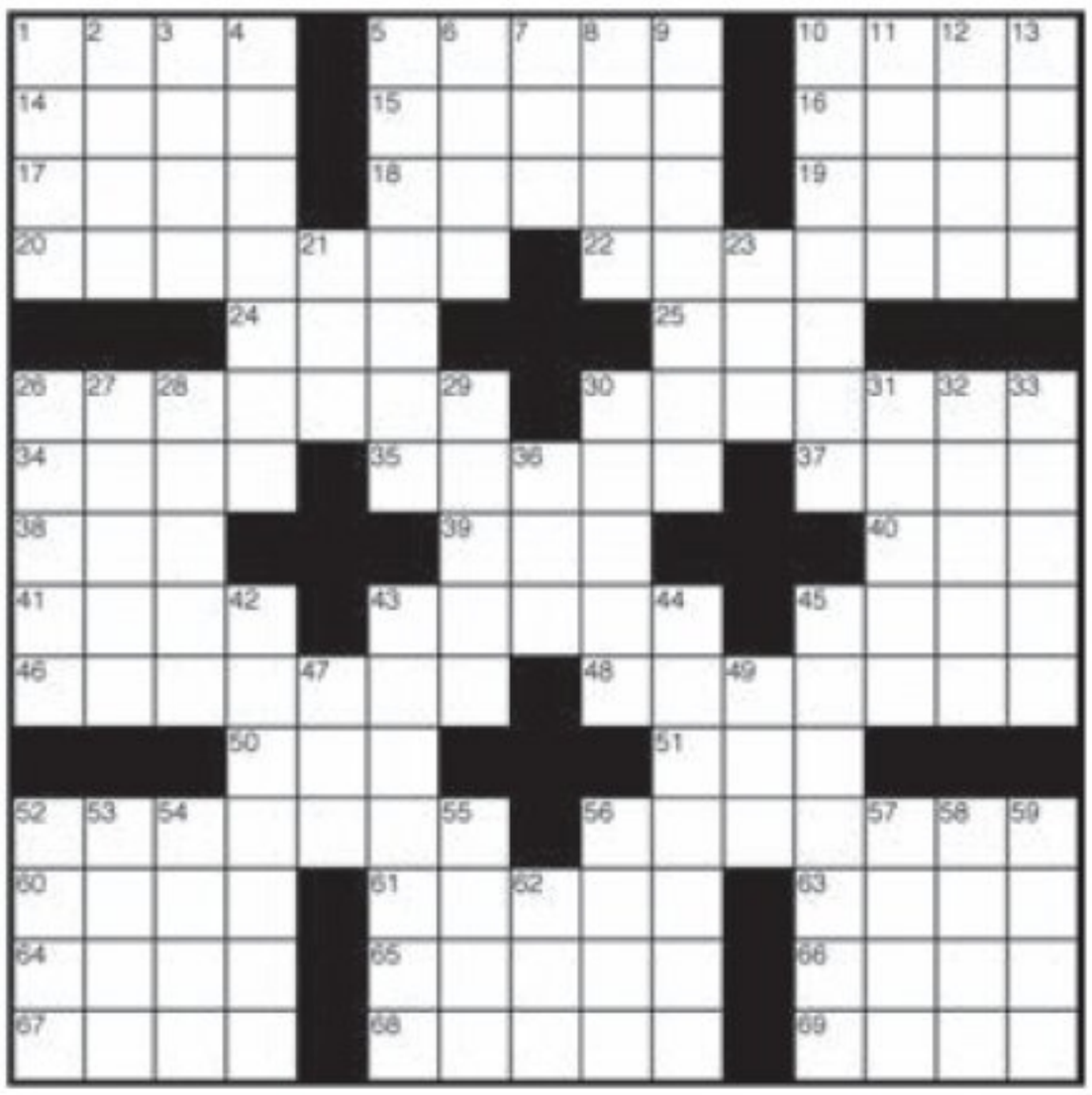

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48 Short versions
50 German physicist
51 — vous plait
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56 Besets
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63 Roulette color
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65 Winter constellation
66 Rush of air
67 Wished undone
68 "Luncheon on the Grass" painter
69 This, in Tijuana

Down

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2 Ramble around
3 Mini-guitars
4 Brand X
5 Level off
6 Equine fodder
7 Highest degree
8 Karate blow
9 Ultimate nature
10 Purse item
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12 Mental fog
13 Luge
21 Chinese zodiac animal
23 Teahouse attire
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53 Karachi language
54 Liver secretion
55 Paretsky or Teasdale
56 Sunblock additive
57 Debt memos
58 Shopper's aid
59 Baja Ms.
62 Hopper

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easy

5		3	8					6
	9				5		3	
			9	7	3	5		
3						1		
	8		4	3	9		6	
		2						8
		9	1	6	2			
	5		3				8	
4					8	2		7

hard

4				3				
		2	9				3	5
			2	7				9
	4	8			3		6	
9		7				3		4
	6		4			8	1	
6				8	2			
8	3				9	2		
				4				1

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Aries Look at the possibilities and make things happen. Don't let what others do or say prevent you from following your dream. Believe in your abilities and show everyone what you can do.

Taurus If you try something new, you will improve your life. Romance is on the rise, and making plans with someone special will bring positive results.

Gemini Taking on a challenge will lead to healthier choices and improve your physical well-being. Your accomplishment will be noticed, and you will be encouraged to reach your goal.

Cancer Show interest in what other people are doing. Your interest and input will bring you closer together and lead to a collaboration that could become quite profitable.

Leo Strive to bring about change and add a little excitement to your life. Your ability to get things done with finesse and bravado will be entertaining and will draw influential attention.

Virgo Tread carefully when dealing with sensitive matters. Not everyone will like your disciplined ways. Be conscientious of others, but do not jeopardize your position.

Libra Listen to complaints and offer solutions. Taking matters into your own hands will empower you to move in a direction that suits your abilities.

Scorpio Discuss your ideas with someone who always gives you a unique point of view. You may not completely agree, but something will tweak your imagination and help you move forward.

Sagittarius Too much spending, indulging and overreacting will lead to trouble. You are best off staying at home and avoiding any situation that will put you in a vulnerable position.

Capricorn Share your findings with others. By taking the lead, you will control the outcome and impress someone you love. Romance is encouraged.

Aquarius Look for a practical way to help others. You have more to offer than you realize. A vocational change will stabilize your personal life and boost your confidence.

Pisces Take one step at a time. Don't feel pressured by someone who is impatient. Being practical will avert loss and lessen risk. Go at your own speed. EUGENIA LAST

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